

Zachary Ruiz

Geoff Morell

ENG-D102

Literature And Composition

Punching Holes in Politics: How “Poof!” And *Trifles* Show Inconsistencies in Ideologies

Wherever one lives there are structures in place to try to create order, whether regulated by nature or nurtured by its inhabitants; it can be found in all places. And while none of these structures are perfect, they cannot all solve the entirety of problems that arise; there is always an element of chaos in life no matter how hard we strive for utopia. Chaos might not be the best word, though, as it is a bit hyperbolic. Instead, let us simply say that no matter how hard we strive for perfection, there are always elements of tension and disunity. One area where people try to create their own little utopias is in their close, intimate relationships with their partners. Lynn Nottage's “Poof!” and Susan Glaspell's “Trifles” are two such plays that force us to look under the carpet and examine the significance of intimate partner violence and how it affects both individuals and communities as a whole. Communities such as these, either independent or part of a larger whole, have and continue to have local problems that either have or would have failed due to intervention. In this paper I intend to prove how not every structure of governance can solve the problems of the local populace.

We first must focus on how governments fail their people and country, a recent example being Venezuela Socialist government sinking their booming economy. As stated by Mises Institute, Venezuela entered the international oil market in 1914 with privately owned oil wells

leading the economic growth. One of their biggest selling points for them being less economic control from the government outside of low tax rates and incentives for expansion of the market. But that all changed when the government slowly yet surely started to put not just their oil market under their control, but other aspects as “the nationalization of the telephone company, the creation of numerous state-owned companies, and state-owned banks.” And once the democratically elected Romulo Betancourt purged the economic institutions that kept the economy in such a boom, it was only a matter of time before all the dominos fell. Connecting this back to our main point, in “Poof!” It was mentioned by Florance that Laureen had called the police at least once about the abuse of Samuel, after which they did nothing. Conclusion being that total government control of aspects of our society such as Economy and security is not able to truly serve the public's best interests.

Continuing the topic of market failures (but shifting from monetary to moral), while the market is a powerful force for change, not all change is inherently good. Take for instance the mass-incarceration which was spurred on by such markets. For those of you that have had the pleasure of not knowing about it, according to Carder Rockwell's paper on the topic Mass incarceration started as a response to the ending of the sudden influx of crime after Americas economic boom after their victory in World War II. The standard managing of crime by the state was replaced as a prison industrial complex controlled by private institutions. As such they start managing prisons as business. We can see cracks in the argument for total market control, one being the bottom line of putting profits over people. If the businesspeople put in charge care more about their wallets than the life's they ruin for a quick buck, it will inevitably lead to a downfall in the quality of life for everyone involved. Think for a moment about the people who had served their time trapped in such a system just so prisons can fill their quotas. At least 1% would be happy!

But in what place do any of my arguments hold water? I have been poking holes without any meaningful injury into only two systems when many more exist within the world! Well, that is the entire point of this. No system is going to ever be flawless no matter how it has been made, who runs it, or its people's reaction. There will always be some blemish that is exploited in conversation against these ideologies. But at the same time, there is where lies the beauty of such conversations. As society's grow people change, and as such what they believe changes. A fitting example of this being the stance of the Republican party. According to Britanica, the Republicans, founded in 1792 by Tomas Jeferson, favored a decentralized government, then continued in the 19th century with a focus of abolishing slavery to new territories. The following years lead to the modern day becoming a party with a focus on states' rights, and opposition of federal control. The same evolution via public though is always going to be prevalent throughout any idea.

While I have talked about how “Poof!” fits into the picture, but what about “Trifles”? In the story Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale found that John Wright had strangled the bird of his long-abused wife, Ms. Write. This led her to strangle him in a fit of grief and/or insanity. Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale hid this information from the authorities to protect her, because of the society they live in, and the fact that she was abused for years before this would have been ignored. In the play this is an example of domestic violence going unnoticed within America. But cut to the modern day after a myriad of civil rights movements, the public mind has shifted to support the unspoken and would have seen Mrs. Write as the victim.

So, what is the final verdict? Well, no governmental system, no matter how its structured will ever encompass every person's idea. But to differentiate such thoughts is the entire ethos to be human. And to live in such a nation which allows myriads of differing ideas is truly an honor.

And even after it is gone, I can only hope for it to remain in the public mind for generations to come.

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